

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-06 EUR-12

TRSE-00 FEA-01 ACDA-05 AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01

CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 OFA-01 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05

JUSE-00 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-03 OMB-01

PA-01 PM-03 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OIC-02 /145 W

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1816

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T GENEVA 2288

FROM USDEL LOS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJECT: LOS: OMANI POSITION ON STRAITS

1. LOS DEL AGREES WITH ASSESSMENT REFTTEL RE OMAN DELS LACK OF DISCRETION TO ACT ON STRAITS ISSUE.

2. WITH RESPECT TO SUBSTANCE OF USG POSITIONS RELEVANT TO OMANI CONCERNS, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE FROM THAT SET FORTH IN MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY. USG CONSIDERS THAT UNIMPEDED TRANSIT FOR ALL VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT THROUGH AND OVER STRAITS MUST BE CONFIRMED IN LOS TREATY. OMANI INTERVENTIONS ON STRAITS ISSUE HAVE NOT SIGNALLED ANY SPECIAL DESIRE TO EXEMPT HORMUZ FROM A GENERAL UNIMPEDED TRANSIT REGIME. IF, HOWEVER, THIS IS ACTUAL OMANI OBJECTIVE, WE CANNOT IN ANY WAY ACCOMMODATE. HORMUZ CONNECTS TWO PARTS OF HIGH SEAS, AND IN OUR VIEW

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THERE EXISTS NO GEORGRAPHIC, POLITICAL OR LEGAL

REASON FOR TAILORING AN EXCEPTION CLAUSE TO EXCLUDE HORMUZ. ON THE CONTRARY, STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF HORMUZ IS SUCH THAT WE CONSIDER IT VITAL THAT RIGHT OF UNIMPEDED TRANSIT APPLY THERE.

3. OMANIS HAVE NOT SIGNALLED ANY SPECIAL CONCERN WITH TIRAN ISSUE. OMANI DEL, WHICH INTRODUCED PARTICULARLY EXTREME ARTICLES AT CARACAS SESSION, RECENTLY STATED TO AMB. STEVENSON THAT STRAITS DO NOT CONSTITUTE A VITAL OMANI INTEREST, YET THEIR OPPOSITION CONTINUES. US DEL IS WORKING WITH ARAB STATES PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH TIRAN (EGYPT, KUWAIT, SAR) TO WORK OUT NON-PREJUDICIAL MEANS OF REMOVING THIS ISSUE FROM LOS CONFERENCE. WE HOPE TO MAKE THIS POINT IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES HERE, WHILE ALLOWING EGYPT, KUWAIT AND SAR TO SELL REST OF ARAB LEAGUE ON COMPROMISE ULTIMATELY AGREED ON.

4. BASIC THRUST OF OMANI INTERVENTIONS HAS BEEN TO ENCOURAGE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WARSHIPS OR QUOTE SHIPS WITH SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS UNQUOTE WHICH HAS BECOME CATCH PHRASE FOR NUCLEAR POWERED SHIPS AND SUPERTANKERS. OMANI PITCH HAS BEEN RATHER STANDARD APPEAL TO THIRD WORLD SECURITY CONCERNS, BUT WE FIND POLEMICS PUZZLING IN VIEW OF OMAN RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN.

5. WHILE OMAN HAS REFERRED TO POLLUTION PROBLEM IN HORMUZ, OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THEIR POSITION CARRIES TOO MUCH ANTI-US BAGGAGE FOR THIS TO BE THEIR MAJOR CONCERN. AS EVIDENCED BY REFERRAL OF ARAB SPLIT OVER STRAITS ISSUE TO ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, OMANI POSITION APPEARS TO RESULT FROM HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL DECISION, THE BASIS OF WHICH WE CANNOT FATHOM.

6. LOS DEL WOULD APPRECIATE SOONEST EMBASSY ASSESSMENT OF (A) TO WHAT DEGREE, IF AT ALL, OMANI POSITION MAY BE STALKING HORSE FOR IRAN, (B) ON OTHER HAND, TO WHAT DEGREE OMAN WOULD OPPOSE IMPORTANT IRANIAN INTERESTS ON STRAITS ISSUE, AND (C) OTHER REASONS FOR

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APPARENT OMANI OPPOSITION.

7. SUGGEST THAT OMAN BE GIVEN FULL EXPLANATION OF US POSITIONS AND TOLD MAJOR MARITIME STATES CANNOT AND WILL NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING REMOTELY APPROACHING OMANI STRAITS POSITION. IN FACT, CURRENT EXTREME OMANI STANCE IS CUTTING HER OFF FROM MAINSTREAM OF STRAITS NEGOTIATION IN GENEVA. IF, AS NOW APPEARS, OTHER

PROPOSED TREATY PROVISIONS, ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC ZONE,
HAVE BROAD THIRD WORLD APPEAL, OMAN WILL FIND HERSELF
UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE FROM OTHER DEVELOPING STATES
TO ACCEPT A STRAITS ARTICLE SHE HAS HAD NO PART IN
NEGOTIATING. OMAN'S ALTERNATIVE WILL BE TO ACCEPT
RESPONSIBILITY FOR BLOCKING AGREEMENT ON A PACKAGE
WHICH HAS BROAD DEVELOPING STATE SUPPORT.DALE

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